



Santa Clara Police Training Flash



Body Worn Camera Activation

Policing in the 21st century is constantly changing and evolving. Part of the evolution is body worn cameras (BWC) and video footage. Our current policy dictates officers **should** activate their BWC if they believe it would be appropriate or valuable to record the incident. This includes stops, field interviews, interviews, or possible adversarial contacts (see below for Lexipol Policy 423.6).

Remember, at no point should an officer risk their safety to activate the BWC.

A good practice to activate the BWC when responding to a call for service or initiating a traffic stop is the “steering wheel to steering wheel” method. Activating the BWC in your vehicle prior to arrival (seated behind the steering wheel) and de-activating the BWC when you leave the scene (seated behind the steering wheel) is a reliable method to capture the contact in its entirety.

The nature of our profession is unpredictable. Using the “Steering wheel to steering wheel” method will ensure we are able to capture important facts even when things get chaotic the split second you exit your vehicle. Maintaining good practices with our BWC would help meet the departmental goals for thorough documentation and transparency.

LEXIPOL POLICY

423.6

ACTIVATION OF THE PORTABLE RECORDER

This policy is not intended to describe every possible situation in which the portable recorder should be used, although there are many situations where its use is appropriate. Members should activate the recorder any time the member believes it would be appropriate or valuable to record an incident.

The portable recorder should be activated in any of the following situations:

- a. All enforcement and investigative contacts including stops and field interview (FI) situations.
- b. Detectives shall use their portable/video recording device when conducting any enforcement action in plainclothes and during any interview in accordance with the Santa Clara County Protocols.
- c. Traffic stops including, but not limited to, traffic violations, stranded motorist assistance and all crime interdiction stops.
- d. Self-initiated activity in which a member would normally notify the Communications Center.
- e. Any other contact that becomes adversarial after the initial contact in a situation that would not otherwise require recording.

Members should remain sensitive to the dignity of all individuals being recorded and exercise sound discretion to respect privacy by discontinuing recording whenever it reasonably appears to the member that such privacy may outweigh any legitimate law enforcement interest in recording. Requests by members of the public to stop recording should be considered using this same criterion. Recording should resume when privacy is no longer at issue unless the circumstances no longer fit the criteria for recording.

At no time is a member expected to jeopardize his/her safety in order to activate a portable recorder or change the recording media. However, the recorder should be activated in situations described above as soon as reasonably practicable.

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